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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 005767

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - GLOBAL ECONOMY: PRICE OF OIL  
UN REFORM  
PARIS - FRIDAY, AUGUST 26, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

GLOBAL ECONOMY: PRICE OF OIL  
UN REFORM

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

SEVERAL STORIES DOMINATE TODAY'S FRONT PAGES: THE RISING PRICE OF OIL AND ITS EFFECT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY, THE THREATS OF AVIAN FLU AND THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY TRANSPORTATION MINISTER DOMINIQUE PERBEN THAT A "BLACK LIST" OF UNSAFE AIRLINES WILL BE AVAILABLE IN FRANCE NEXT WEEK.

THE ECONOMIC PRESS AND POPULAR LE PARISIEN LEAD WITH THE HIGH COST OF OIL. THE EDITORIAL IN LES ECHOS IS TITLED "LIVING WITH HIGH OIL PRICES" WHILE LA TRIBUNE HEADLINES: "HIGH OIL PRICES PENALIZE WORLD MARKETS." (SEE PART C)

IRAQ AND THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION ARE FACTUALLY REPORTED, WHILE LE FIGARO DEVOTES A MAJOR ARTICLE TO COLOMBIAN MERCENARIES BEING RECRUITED FROM LATIN AMERICA THROUGH THE INTERNET TO SERVE IN IRAQ.

LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION DEVOTES ITS LEAD TO THE WORLDWIDE THREAT OF AVIAN FLU AND ASKS ON ITS FRONT PAGE: "SHOULD WE WORRY?" THE ANSWER IN THE EDITORIAL IS CLEARLY THAT "ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO IMMEDIATE THREAT, PROTECTIVE MEASURES ARE NECESSARY, BUT NOT ONLY IN RICH COUNTRIES."

UN REFORM AND THE "U.S. STRONG ARMING ATTEMPTS" ARE THE BASIS FOR A REPORT IN LE FIGARO WHICH COMMENTS: "THE 750 AMENDMENTS PROPOSED BY JOHN BOLTON EXPLICITLY AIM TO TAILOR THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION TO MEET AMERICAN INTERESTS." (SEE PART C)

THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT FROM GAZA ELICIT AN OP-ED BY JAVIER SOLANA IN LE FIGARO AND AN INTERVIEW WITH MAHMUD ABBAS IN LIBERATION. SOLANA WRITES: "THE EUROPEAN UNION IS FULLY READY TO TAKE ON THE ROLE OF THIRD PARTY IN THE REGION AS FAR AS BORDER CONTROL IS CONCERNED, IF REQUESTED BY BOTH SIDES. THIS ROLE OF UMPIRE WILL CONTRIBUTE TO FACILITATE THE FREE CIRCULATION OF GOODS AND PEOPLE BETWEEN GAZA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD. THE EU'S EFFORT IN TERMS OF COORDINATION WITH THE U.S. AND THE QUARTET MARKS ITS DESIRE TO BE MORE THAN JUST SUPPORTIVE. WE ARE READY TO INTENSIFY OUR INVOLVEMENT."

INTERVIEWED IN LIBERATION, MAHMOUD ABBAS SAYS: "SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST BANK ARE ILLEGAL. WE MUST DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF THE WEST BANK WITH THE ISRAELIS THROUGH THE U.S., BECAUSE THE AMERICANS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR DETERMINATION TO SEE A FREEZING OF THE SETTLEMENTS. THIS IS WHAT PRESIDENT BUSH SAID. WE MUST OF COURSE SPEAK WITH THE ISRAELIS, BUT THE PRESSURE WILL HAVE TO COME FROM THE U.S. AND EUROPE. THE EGYPTIANS AND THE AMERICANS WILL BE HELPING US IN THE RECONSTRUCTION. WE ALREADY HAVE THE ASSURANCE OF THE U.S."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

GLOBAL ECONOMY: PRICE OF OIL

"LIVING WITH THE HIGH COST OF OIL"

JEAN-MARC VITTORI IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LES ECHOS (08/26): "WITH THE BARREL OF OIL CLOSE TO 70 DOLLARS, IT IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE TO HIDE ONE'S HEAD IN THE SAND. WORLD MARKETS ARE BEGINNING TO FEEL THE CRUNCH AND SO ARE THE ECONOMIES. THE COUNTRIES REGISTERING ECONOMIC GROWTH ARE GOING TO SLOWDOWN. THIS IS TRUE FOR ASIA. THOSE WITH A SLOWER GROWTH, LIKE EUROPE, ARE SEEING THEIR HOPES OF BETTER DAYS EVAPORATE. CONSUMERS ARE PAYING MORE FOR GAS, AND COMPANIES, WHOSE COSTS ARE INCREASING, CANNOT AFFORD TO PASS THEM ON TO THE BELEAGUERED CONSUMER. WE MUST REACT. WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS FOR FRANCE? THERE ARE A NUMBER OF MEASURES THAT CAN BE TAKEN; MANY OF THEN MUST BE GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES. ENERGY ISSUES CANNOT BE LEFT TO THE MARKETS. THOSE WHO HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT THIS CAN LOOK BEYOND OUR BORDERS: IN WASHINGTON, BEIJING AND MOSCOW, ENERGY IS A HIGH LEVEL STRATEGY ISSUE."

UN REFORM

"U.S. STRONG ARMING ATTEMPTS"

ALAIN BARLUET IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (08/26): "BEFORE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON UN REFORM, WASHINGTON HAS ALREADY SET ITS CONDITIONS. THE U.S. INITIATIVE IS DESCRIBED IN A CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT WHICH THE NEW U.S. AMBASSADOR, JOHN

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BOLTON, HAS STARTED CIRCULATING, PROPOSING 750 AMENDMENTS AND CLEARLY INDICATING WASHINGTON'S PRIORITIES FOR THE 'NEW UN.' AT THE HEAD OF THE LIST IS THE U.S. PREOCCUPATION WITH THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO ERASE ANY TRACE OF AMBIGUITY BETWEEN TERRORIST ACTIONS AND ARMED RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS. ANOTHER AMERICAN PRIORITY IS THE REPLACEMENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, WHICH HAS RECENTLY BEEN DISCREDITED, WITH PERMANENT MEMBERS WHO HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT THEY ARE GOOD STUDENTS OF DEMOCRACY. THE U.S. EXPLICITLY WANTS THE UN TO CONFORM TO ALL THINGS PERTAINING TO U.S. INTERESTS. THE 'BOLTON AMENDMENTS' SUGGEST THAT ANY MENTION OF THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE SHOULD BE OMITTED. WITH A STROKE OF THE PEN THE AMERICANS ARE CROSSING OUT THE OBJECTIVES OF THE MILLENNIUM ACCOUNT. INSTEAD OF THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY THEY WANT TO PUT THE ACCENT ON LIBERALIZING ECONOMIES. THESE PROPOSALS ARE SURE TO RAISE OPPOSITION FROM POOR COUNTRIES. SAYS A UN SOURCE: 'THIS IS TRULY A STRONG ARMING TACTIC. FOR THE AMERICANS, THE RULE IS MAKE OR BREAK.' WHILE THE BOLTON AMENDMENTS ARE NOT A COMPLETE SURPRISE. THE NEGOTIATIONS, WITH THREE WEEKS TO GO BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE SUMMIT, ARE AKIN TO A MISSION IMPOSSIBLE. OR A SINKING OF THE REFORM PLANS. 'NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE VERY, VERY DIFFICULT' SAYS A UN AMBASSADOR." HOFMANN